

School of Theology at Claremont



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THE GROUNDWORK  
OF  
SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

BY  
WILLIAM GLOVER

AUTHOR OF  
*Know Your Own Mind*



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS



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Psychology

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SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

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# SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

## CHAPTER I

### THE NEED OF PRELIMINARY STUDIES

WHEN he was quite young and foolish—the terms are often complementary—a certain friend of mine got married. Observe that I began the previous sentence with a “when,” not with “because”; for I wished to state a fact, not to draw an inference. Now, however, I will make use of a “because.” *Because* he was quite young and foolish, my friend, when he bought a house for self and partner to reside in, went about the business injudiciously. You do not need the wisdom of the serpent when you deal with a man who is harmless as a dove. But speculative builders are not, generally speaking, doves; and my friend soon found that he had got hold of one who was a specimen of the hawk family—or, rather, the one who was a specimen of the hawk family had got hold of *him*.

The house looked all right—pretty, picturesque, and so on; it was only when one came to live in it that one perceived its defects;

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and these defects became more numerous and more pronounced with each succeeding year. The artistic little grates gave a minimum of heat for a maximum of coal-consumption, and every chimney smoked when the wind was in the north. Unless tightly wedged, the windows rattled with every passing zephyr, and thundered in a stiff breeze. Rain percolated through the roof, made dark patches on the ceilings, and kept would-be sleepers awake by "plopping" into the buckets and basins set to catch the droppings; while, every now and then, a piece of saturated plaster would fall upon the people in bed. The timber in the doors did everything that properly constituted timber should not do; it swelled in the rain, warped in the sunshine, wilted and cracked under the banging and tugging that were necessary before the confounded things would open or shut. The floor-boards seemed to regard dry-rot as a real personal friend, whose advent was to be welcomed, not resisted. As for the walls, not only were they damp, even in the driest weather, but, more alarming still, they developed a gradually extending system of cracks and downright fissures which putty and successive layers of expensive paper quite failed to hide. These were but a few of the defects which the speculative builder who was not so

harmless as a dove had foisted upon my friend who was not so wise as a serpent.

But the house had also inconveniences for which the builder was not responsible. As far as accommodation went, it provided amply for two persons; but, when the two became six, the situation changed, and things became a good deal cramped. Pity it is that Mother Nature does not provide for the expansion of a family in the same way as she provides for the growth of a lobster—an automatic enlargement of shell. But there are favourites in every department, Nature's included.

Perhaps my friend would have gone on to the present day, existing in a house with which he was deeply dissatisfied, living a life of domestic compromise between what ought to be and what is, had not something happened; a bomb from an aeroplane wrecked the whole building. Fortunately this occurred while the family was at Church—a circumstance from which the reader may draw his own moral.

Thus, reconstruction became necessary. Now if you had been in my friend's place, how would you have gone about the task? Obviously, the first thing to do would be to decide exactly what you want, and the second and last thing to do would be to get exactly what you want. If you wish to make a success



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either of house-building or of life-building, these are the two essential steps. Let us be quite clear on that point.

And in taking these two essential steps, it will save you from tripping if you are possessed of two valuable things—knowledge and sagacity.

1. Knowledge and sagacity will help you in deciding wisely as to what you want. They will, for instance, prevent you from building on foundations that are insecure, swampy, or pestiferous; from sacrificing interior comfort to exterior ornament; and from depriving your kitchen and parlour of space in order to have a drawing-room suitable for such functions as funerals, weddings, and afternoon tea.

And they will help you to *get* what you want. Let us suppose that you have decided wisely as to what you really *do* want. How are you going to proceed in the getting of it? Say you give your instructions to an architect, and he, in due course, passes them on to the contractor. Well, given a thoroughly honest and thoroughly competent architect, and a thoroughly honest and thoroughly competent contractor, such an arrangement would very likely work out satisfactorily. But the world is not full of thoroughly honest and thoroughly competent architects and contractors; I know

it; and I have not got my knowledge from books. So it might pay you handsomely if you yourself took a hand in the task of reconstructing your house—not, of course, in the actual hewing of timber and laying of bricks, but in careful and intelligent supervision of what was going on. In this way you might make sure that your wants were catered for exactly and precisely in plan and specification; and that plan and specification were exactly and precisely followed in the putting up of the new structure.

But you say you know nothing, or next to nothing, about planning or building. Then *get* to know something. You need not aim at becoming an expert architect, bricklayer, carpenter, plumber, and hod-carrier rolled in one; life would be too short for such an undertaking, even if you gave up the job by which you earn your daily bread. But you *ought* to aim at knowing enough about the individual departments of these specialists to ensure your getting what you want, that is, good materials and good workmanship in a house the accommodation of which just suits you. To obtain this knowledge, you must go in for a course of studies, not exhaustive, but rather general—a kind of bird's-eye view, accurate as far as it goes, but not detailed. Lookers on, it is said,

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see most of the game. Well, if only you can look on with intelligence and discernment at the reconstruction of your house, you will now and then be able to stop the little games that dishonesty and incompetence are so fond of playing—in the building trade.

Let me sum up my conclusions as to the wise reconstruction of a house. Two requisites are essential, viz. knowledge and sagacity. Knowledge does not come by nature; but I think sagacity does, though it may be vastly improved by training. And to gain knowledge and improve sagacity it is necessary (1) to read and study, (2) to observe, (3) to reflect upon what you have read, studied, and observed, and (4) to apply to practical house-building the judgments at which you have arrived.

Now if it pays a man who is reconstructing his house to know something about house-building, it certainly ought to pay people who aim at reconstructing society to know something about social-building; for society is indeed a vast structure, with many parts joined in one undivided whole. Perhaps it would have been nearer the mark to call it an organism; for it is alive, whereas a structure is usually built up of dead matter. But the word "structure" will do very well—if only we take care not to press the metaphor too far.

Like the friend whom I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the individual members of society had, most of them, at the start of the twentieth century, come to the conclusion that they were living in a structure—a social structure this time—which they had quite outgrown, and of which the defects were becoming more marked from year to year. But the average Briton is, in the main, inert, hard to move, and as patient and submissive under conventional burdens as the homely ass; and, had it not been for what we might term the bomb of the Great War, which knocked to smithereens a large part of the social edifice in which he had led his life of sleepy compromise, he might for some time longer have put up with conditions of existence that had become almost, but not quite, intolerable.

At the present time, however, seeing that the social structure has been so badly damaged, reconstruction has become imperative. And here I want to emphasize one point: it is you and I, the units of the British Democracy, who are primarily and chiefly responsible for the work of reconstruction. The man who pays the piper calls the tune; the British taxpayer pays the piper; and it is his to call the tune. In other words, his should be the ideas according to which society should be reconstructed,

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and his should be the responsibility of seeing that his ideas are adequately planned and duly and properly executed. So if things go wrong, and the upshot is not what we intended it to be, do not let us blame our architect—the Government in its legislative capacity; or our contractor—the Government in its administrative capacity. Rather let us blame ourselves, either because of the unwisdom of our ideas, or because we were too indifferent as to the manner in which our wise ideas eventuated in foolish institutions.

And here I would ask you to turn back for a moment. If you will note what I said about the reconstruction of a house, you will see that much the same may be said about the reconstruction of society. In both cases, if the work is to be good work well done, two steps are necessary, viz.:

1. To *decide* exactly what you want.

2. To *get* exactly what you want.

And it will save you from tripping if you are possessed of two things, knowledge and sagacity.

1. Knowledge and sagacity will help you in *deciding* what you want.

2. Knowledge and sagacity will help you in *getting* what you want.

And, as in the case of house-building, so in

the case of social-building, to gain knowledge and improve sagacity you must (1) read and study, (2) observe, (3) reflect upon what you have read and studied, (4) apply to practical social-building the judgments at which you have arrived.

Now social-building, like house-building, is not one trade but many, and each is more or less in the hands of specialists. There are specialists for education, specialists dealing with family relationships, food specialists, drink specialists, industrial specialists, and specialists dealing with the individual relations to the State; these are but a few of the many agencies which are labouring at the task of social-building. Of course it is out of the question for the average citizen to attain the standard of expert knowledge in the whole of these various departments; but he can, and he most certainly ought, at the very least, to know something about the general principles which underlie them all.

Well-meaning persons may possibly here raise an objection, and say, "This is no time for theorizing. The matter is urgent, and calls for immediate action. The world will not be reformed by thinking about things, but by doing them." Well, action, experiment, and relief should undoubtedly be the response to

the new world-call. But precipitate and ill-considered action may, with the very best intentions, do far more harm than good. Understanding should come before experiment; and, though bold experiment may now and then be more profitable than academic neutrality and moral timidity, yet the more one realizes the scope and size of the social question, the more one becomes impressed with the necessity of a well-thought-out plan of campaign, a plan mapped out with sanity, wisdom, patience, temperance, and insight. This is the age of rush. Get rich quick! Do good quick! But reflection should precede acceleration. Seers are quite as necessary as doers. I remember to have read that, once upon a time, there was a certain herd of swine that ran violently down a steep place into the sea.

Now the aim of social reconstruction is to give the highest benefit to each and every individual person. This highest benefit can only come through individual self-development, self-realization; the powers of body, mind, and spirit with which a person is endowed should be made to unfold, bud and blossom in their natural course. And, as every person is a member of the social order, self-development, self-realization, must be sought, not apart from others, but in relation to them. Thus, the prob-



lem to be solved is this: Set, as I am, within the social order, how shall my own self be realized, amplified, developed, sustained, and rendered serviceable to the community in which I live?

Are we going to reconstruct the social edifice? Then we must aim at building such an edifice as will foster and encourage the self-realization and self-development of individual citizens. There are wretched, disgraceful tenements where the growth of the miserable inmates must of necessity be stunted and deformed; and there are stately mansions fit for the rearing of the noblest work of God, the crown of creation, man. Let us see to it that in our reconstruction of the social system we build a mansion, and not a hovel.

I said just now that perhaps it would have been nearer the mark to call society an organism rather than a structure; for it is alive, whereas a structure is usually built up of dead matter. And this renders a word of warning advisable. Social reconstruction must not be rigid. Given the perfect man set in a perfect social system, and further change would be uncalled for. But the perfect man has not yet arrived; neither has the perfect society. So no present reconstruction of a living, developing society can be adamant, ultimate; no present

solution of the social problem can be final; all our experiments must be tentative, and there must be an ever-changing adaptation of the social structure to the ever-changing nature of the individual.

With these words of introduction, let us now pass on to a consideration of the general principles that underlie the science of social reconstruction. Our series of short studies will deal with the following subjects, and their bearing upon the subject in hand: Social Science, Economics, Ethics, Ethical Idealism, and, finally, Religion.

## CHAPTER II

## SOCIAL SCIENCE

LIKE every other science, Social Science, the science of man as a member of society, could not exist unless it had a body of facts to go upon. Here are a few social facts from my own observation:

1. John Jones gets drunk every pay-day.
2. Mary Brown's favourite cooker is the frying-pan.
3. Thomas Robinson has brought up a family of ten on a pound a week.
4. Fitzroy Percy the millionaire and Bill Smith the tramp, each gets food-and-sustenance without earning it.
5. Michael O'Halloran is an expert with the blackthorn.
6. Sandy MacAllister looks twice at a six-pence before spending it, and then puts it back in his pocket.

You and I could go on for hours enumerating social facts from our own observation, and we are adding to our store daily. So that, though it does not follow that we are, as yet, students of Social Science, we have made a

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right beginning; we have accumulated, and are still accumulating, a store of what we may term the raw material from which Social Science may be elaborated.

What, then, do we mean by Social Science? It is the application of the scientific method to a consideration of social facts. And what is the scientific method? It consists of three distinct steps.

1. *It consists of accurate and scrupulous observation.* Without accurate and scrupulous observation, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology, anatomy, and the rest of the natural sciences, would be a tissue of uncertainties, disappointments, fallacies. And the same qualities which are so absolutely necessary in the natural sciences, are equally imperative in the group of social sciences. Poverty, unemployment, drink, crime, labour discontent, industrial unrest: these are all social phenomena; they are as much facts as the facts of chemistry and physics; and they call for the same qualities of accurate and scrupulous observation.

Is this contention just? Then why is it not more generally acted upon? For, in common practice, people treat Social Science in a very different manner from that in which they treat the natural sciences. Note the contrast.

(a) Suppose a recognized doctor had a habit

of observing the facts of surgery and medicine in a casual, careless, happy-go-lucky fashion. Knowing this, would you care to call him in to a case of fever, or to entrust him with a difficult and dangerous operation—upon yourself? Nay, you would think twice even before letting him prescribe for a headache or prick a blister. A doctor whose diagnosis was not both accurate and scrupulous would be no good for you.

(*b*) Suppose a recognized quack were to take his stand in the market-place. He might have a wonderful gift of speech, but he would be able to persuade none but fools to submit their bodies to his treatment. Inaccurate and unscrupulous, the quack also would be no good for you.

(*c*) And suppose that you yourself, an uninstructed layman, desired, say, to have a tumour removed. Would you attempt to remove it yourself? I think not.

In all these instances, you would insist that the art of the person whom you permitted to operate, experiment, upon your body should be founded upon, and permeated by, the most accurate and scrupulous observation.

Well, if you insist upon these things in matters pertaining to your material body, why not insist upon them in matters pertaining to

the social body of which you are a member? For observe:

(a) There are casual, careless, happy-go-lucky propagandists to whose schemes for operation upon the social body—social reform—people defer in a casual, careless, happy-go-lucky spirit that is by no means in evidence where the treatment of bodily ailments is concerned.

(b) There are absolute quacks, wonderfully plausible charlatans, splendid upon a platform, quite at home on the top of a tub, who, in social matters, succeed in persuading men and women not generally esteemed fools.

(c) There are persons—the world is pretty full of them—who, knowing little or nothing about social science, have neither compunction nor misgiving in taking upon themselves the task of planning and working out for themselves a social millennium.

Let me therefore repeat—for the point needs driving home: None but real, genuine, serious students of social science should attempt to experiment, operate, upon the body social. And the first requisite of social science is accurate and scrupulous observation.

There are many—perhaps too many—social dreamers; but if the dreams of to-day are to become the realities of to-morrow, they must

he founded and built, not upon the clouds of fancy, the mirages of sentiment, but upon the solid rock of hard facts; and hard facts are the outcome of accurate and scrupulous observation. Mr Gradgrind, the great apostle of hard facts in Dickens' *Hard Times*, had the root of the matter in him; what he chiefly lacked was interpretation, insight.

2. *It consists of comparison, classification, generalization.* It is not sufficient merely to *observe* facts. For instance, a man may be keen on the observation, say, of plants; whenever he takes his walks abroad he may add to his store of knowledge about them; and, eventually, his mind may become a very encyclopaedia of plant-facts. But, so long as these are disconnected, isolated, a higgledy-piggledy jumble like random dots on a sheet of paper, they do not constitute a science, the science of botany. To attain that dignity, reflection is necessary. The fact-collector must go over his store, compare the different items, and, by intelligent comparison, discover certain general principles of resemblance and difference. Then he must arrange the whole of his facts in classes according to the general principles he has discovered. And it is not until this process has been duly completed that the man of



plant-facts can be truly called a student of botany.

In a similar way, a man may be keen on the observation of social facts—facts of industry, politics, race, the family, charity, crime, drink, and so on; every day he may add to his store of knowledge about them; until, eventually, his mind may become a very encyclopaedia of social facts. But without reflection, comparison, discovery of general principles of resemblance and difference, and classification in accordance with the general principles discovered, the social facts cannot be called social science; they are merely the bricks out of which the edifice of social science may be built. “Without principles,” says Poincaré, in his *Science and Hypothesis*, “which at every stage transcend precise confirmation through such experience as is then accessible, the organization of experience is impossible.”

Here, will you permit me to suggest a little exercise on the subject-matter of the two preceding paragraphs? You are an observer of social facts. Very well. But when you say “social facts” you are doubtless aware that the expression covers a very wide tract of ground. In the first place, then, restrict your view to, say, one small plot in what we may term the huge allotment-field of social facts;

and confine your attention, for instance, to the subject of unemployment.

Take a sheet of paper—half-a-dozen sheets—and set down all the facts you have observed about unemployment, numbering them consecutively 1, 2, 3, and so on; and please note that they should be facts which you have observed, not facts which somebody else has observed and communicated to you either by word of mouth or through print.

Now take your list, read it over, reflect upon it, hunt for resemblances and differences; and see if you can divide your facts into groups according to these resemblances and differences. Lastly, run over your groups, and try to find certain general principles common to all; for, just as there are principles which bind individual facts into groups, so there are wider principles which bind the whole of the groups into one.

If you go through this process thoroughly, systematically, you will be justified in calling yourself a student in that section of social science known as “unemployment.” When you have finished your own classification, compare it with those which other observers have made and set forth in books. But do not defer too readily to the conclusions at which other people have arrived; for your mind should not

be a mere dumping-ground for the opinions of others; on the contrary, you should form the inestimable habit of thinking for yourself.

3. *It consists of a recognition of the truth that all social facts form one united whole.* Just as gravitation, cohesion, heat, light, electricity, are, each and all, manifestations of the one physical energy which runs the material world; so the various social forces such as those which regulate the family, industry, education, unemployment, and so on, are manifestations of the one mind-energy which runs the social world. And just as there are no water-tight compartments in physical science, so there are no water-tight compartments in social science. In neither case are the phenomena isolated, independent; all are inter-related in a manner wonderfully complex.

This is the age of specialists; but a broad, general education should always precede specialization. A medical practitioner who takes, say, the eye as his particular province of study and treatment, could never be successful unless he possessed a wide general knowledge of the human body; for the eye is not an isolated unit, but, on the contrary, is affected by conditions of bodily health and disease. And what holds true of the medical specialist holds equally true of the social specialist, viz. the man who

devotes his attention to some special department of social work. In his case, too, a broad general education in social science should precede social specialization.

For want of a recognition of this truth, there have been many disappointments and failures in the efforts of social reformers. For instance, a philanthropist applies himself to the cure of the national drink-habit, and at first he often regards it as an isolated evil, for the elimination of which all that is necessary is some one definite remedy, such as a pledge of total abstinence, or prohibition. Like the quack of the market-place, he has only one cry, "Take my pill, and all shall be well with you."

By and by, however, he will, if he keeps an open mind, see that the drink habit is a product of many factors—the home, industry, the craving for pleasure, and so on. The thirst which drives men to the public-house is by no means a thirst for liquor alone, but often a thirst for companionship, light, warmth, shelter, cheerful society; and dismal, squalid homes are splendidly successful in the manufacture of drink-sodden loafers. Bad food, bad air, excessive hours of labour, an absence of healthy recreations, nerves on edge, a hopeless outlook, and a desire to escape for a brief period from a drab, stale life: it is factors like

these that find their finished product in the drink habit; and temperance reform must take account of them unless it chooses to remain provincial, unscientific, temporary.

And what is true of the drink habit is equally true of other fields of social reform. State Socialism, the Organization of Industry, the Position of Woman: these, and the rest, are not isolated groups of phenomena, but closely related bodies of facts. Indeed, the more closely the various social questions are examined, the more completely do they disclose their inter-dependence; the student of social science, though he dedicate himself to a special task, finds himself involved in enterprises with which he at first seemed to have nothing to do; and the last word of social science, as of natural science, is the confession of the unity of the whole world.

At the beginning of this chapter we said that Social Science was the application of the scientific method to social facts. Then we went on to state that the scientific method consisted of three distinct steps, viz. accurate and scrupulous observation; comparison, classification and generalization; and a recognition of the truth that all social facts form one united whole. In all social work the scientific method should be used.

But note, lastly, that the scientific method is, in the main, a process of intellect; and the habit of mind it induces is neutral, tranquil, and unmoved by the facts with which it deals; indeed it is largely a matter of pure reason, with which the emotions have little or nothing to do. Thus, to a mathematician, engaged, say, upon a problem of geometry, love, joy, the passion for helping others, if they come at all, come as disturbances and hindrances to his work; they play pranks with the method scientific; they are interlopers, trespassing upon another's beat. The Social Question, however, brings in one new factor; for, though it calls for a scientific method of procedure, it has in it a human appeal to be felt and obeyed. And herein it has one great advantage peculiar to itself; for, though using the machinery of the scientific method, it is animated by an emotional driving-force that neutral-minded science lacks. "I love my brother! Then just see how I'll work for him!"

## CHAPTER III

## ECONOMICS

ECONOMICS, so my dictionary tells me, is the science of the production and distribution of wealth. When, therefore, I study economics, I am studying the principles which underlie the processes by which wealth may be and actually is produced and distributed. Here, for example, is Britain, a country more or less wealthy; and here, in Britain, is a millionaire trader living but a stone's throw from a slum inhabited by his poverty-stricken workpeople. How is it that this wealth has flowed into Britain, and why is it so very unequally distributed? These, and such-like, are questions the answers to which lie within the province of economics.

Now the accumulation and distribution of wealth is not a simple, natural phenomenon, like the accumulation and distribution of drifting snow. On the contrary, it is a series of processes both complex and artificial; and these processes, being carried on by man, influence human life in a variety of ways. Work, wages, division of profits, city life, rural life, housing,



drink, food—these are all conditions and problems with which we are faced when we attempt to produce and distribute wealth; they are economic conditions and problems.

But if you look at the above list, you will see that these are all social conditions too; so that, in studying economics we seem to be on the straight road to a solution of the social question. And thus we come to the conclusion that any attempt at social reconstruction should be preceded by some study of economics.

Let us suppose, then, that you are beginning the study of economics. Take the works of half-a-dozen different authorities and compare them. What do you find? Well, to put it mildly, you find that the authorities do not *quite* agree. If you were to take up half-a-dozen works, say, on algebra, you would find that the authorities did agree; and not one of them would contradict others who asserted, for instance, that  $(a + b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2$ . In economics, however, authorities are constantly contradicting each other. Here are a few points of disagreement.

1. (a) Economics is a pure, abstract, deductive science, with certain dogmatic principles which may be applied to individual cases. Given these dogmatic principles, and the human reason needs no help from obser-

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vation in the application of principle to individual practice. A capital example of a pure, abstract, deductive science is geometry. Euclid starts with a few dogmatic principles (you must never dispute the truth of a dogmatic principle) and from these, without the aid of observation, his reason deduces the whole body of the truths of his geometry.

(*b*) Economics is an inductive science, based upon history, statistics, systematic observation of phenomena; and the general principles at which it arrives are obtained by reasoning from the individual facts of experience. A deductive science starts with general principles, and applies them to individual cases. An inductive science starts with individual cases, and from them arrives at general principles; but, once the general principles have been arrived at, an inductive science becomes deductive. A good example of an inductive science is chemistry; it obtains general truths by means of a multiplicity of experiments.

2. (*a*) It is indifferent to social welfare—just as algebra is indifferent to social welfare.

(*b*) It is an instrument of social welfare.

3. (*a*) It is a weapon in the hands of capitalists, whereby they exploit the wage-earners.

(*b*) This weapon may be wrested from the capitalists by a combination of wage-earners.

4. (a) It is an unmoral science, like mathematics and chemistry.

(b) It is a moral science, like ethics or theology.

(c) It is an immoral science, like burglary or card-sharping.

Evidently, the conclusions at which we arrive concerning the relation of economics to social reconstruction will largely depend upon which of the preceding opinions we hold; so it is well that we should have clear and decided views upon the subject. Let us look a little further into the matter.

The two great pioneers in economics, Adam Smith and Ricardo, advocated industrial freedom, and would have it that the free competition of individuals is the safest road to the general welfare. To look after one's material interests, they said in effect, is the very best way of contributing to the common good. Moreover, they asserted that this free competition of individuals worked according to certain laws as natural and inevitable as gravitation, and that the less these laws were interfered with by sentimentalists and philanthropists, the better it would be for the social order. According to this doctrine, a scientific selfishness is the true way to a social millennium.

Tabulated, its conclusions are as follows:

1. Economics is a science based upon fixed and unalterable natural laws.
2. When philanthropists and sentimentalists interfere with these laws, they do harm, not good.
3. These laws, working under the system of free competition, will, by their sole action, bring about a social millennium.

Now the first of these conclusions is doubtless correct. There *are* fixed and unalterable natural laws, by conforming to which we may accumulate material wealth. For instance, if, taking advantage of the fact that a farmer was at his wits' end for ready money, I was to buy his corn at half the market price; and if, lying low for my opportunity—as a tiger lies low for his prey—I was to hold up my stock until I could sell it to a starving population at a profit of a thousand per cent.; by a fixed and unalterable natural law, this process of doing business would bring me untold gold. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that even if the possessor of such gold could take it with him into the great Hereafter, it could never be his, permanently; it would so very quickly vaporize.

The second conclusion might be quite true if man were merely a soulless machine for the

accumulation of material wealth. In this connection, the words of Ruskin are to the point. He says that the orthodox economics of his time was like "a science of gymnastics which assumed that man had no skeleton. It might be shown, on that supposition, that it would be advantageous to roll the students up into pellets, flatten them into cakes, or stretch them into cables; and that when these results were effected, the reinsertion of the skeleton would be attended with various inconveniences to their constitution. The reasoning might be admirable, the conclusions true, and the science deficient only in applicability. Modern political economy stands on a precisely similar basis....I do not deny the truth of this theory: I simply deny its applicability to the present phase of the world."

The third of these conclusions is flatly contradicted by the facts of experience. Economic laws, working under the system of free competition, have had a fair trial, at least in Britain, and no one would say that they have brought about a social millennium. Indeed, the social conditions which have followed in their train would have been well-nigh unendurable, had it not been for the "interferences" of sentimentalists and philanthropists and the drastic action of the State legislature. No, economic

laws, working under a system of free competition—though this may be a state of affairs well enough for beasts, it is not well enough for man; *it is the law of the jungle*. Moreover, the growth of industry, with its forces of combination, and its aggregation of capital, has rendered free competition of equal, or approximately equal, industrial units practically impossible. At present, therefore, we may say that the economic optimism of Adam Smith is pretty generally discredited.

But what about its much-talked-of successor, so-called Scientific Socialism? Its pioneers accepted the previous doctrine that economics is an abstract science, based upon absolute principles, but added the significant qualification *within the sphere of private property*. So long, therefore, they said, as the system of private property continues to exist, the evils of the old system of economics will continue to exist also; wage-earners and wages will constantly fluctuate about the line which represents at any period the minimum of necessities for existence; there will be antagonism of class interests, of wages and profits, of profits and rents; wage-earners will be for ever condemned to dependence; the social classes will be for ever set asunder; and labour will be for ever exploited by capital.

But what is the suggested remedy? A revolution in economic conditions. The system of private property must be swept away; and, with its disappearance, the bad old economics will disappear also, and its place will be taken by a new and better system.

But the new doctrine proved to be quite as rigid as the teaching it was designed to supplant. It, too, had its inexorable laws. It was, in fact, pure economic determinism. "The mode of procedure in material life," said Marx, "determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life." And Bebel taught that "the thoroughgoing exploitation of all instruments of production makes the new foundation of society. Conditions of life and work for both sexes—manufacture, agriculture, commerce, education, marriage, science, art, social life,—in a word the whole of human existence will then be transformed." In short, all other schemes of social amelioration are to be regarded as superfluous, as mere obstructions to the supreme end of economic change; and the only way to the social millennium lies along the path of economic determinism.

Let us tabulate these conclusions in the same way as we tabulated those of Smith and Ricardo.



1. Economics is a science based upon fixed and unalterable natural laws.

2. When philanthropists and sentimentalists interfere with these laws they do harm, not good.

3. These laws, working under the system of the socialization of private property, will, by their sole action, bring about a social millennium.

In the first two of these conclusions, Smith and Ricardo agree with the followers of economic determinism, so no more need be said on these points. The difference appears in conclusion number three; and here, substituting the socialization of private property for a system of free competition, the advocates of economic determinism make the same large claims as did their predecessors.

But the original faith in economic determinism was soon confronted by the same difficulties which every philosophy of materialism has to meet. Its formula was altogether too simple for the complexity of modern life; and far more goes to fashion human character and well-being than the motives and forces of any system of economics. Better the outward conditions by all means, but other things are necessary for benefiting the whole man. "Character," said Mr Lewes, "is to outward



circumstances what the organism is to the outer world, living in it, but not determined by it.... Various characters live under identical circumstances, excited by them, not formed by them.... Character builds an existence out of circumstances; our strength is measured by our plastic force." And Professor Peabody well sums up the matter when he says: "In short, the earlier orthodoxy of socialism—though the polar opposite of the orthodoxy of *Laissez faire*—accepted the same way of redemption and erred by the same defect. Both faiths were attempts to reduce to terms of economics a phenomenon much too complex for so simple a formula. *Laissez faire* maintained that the social order left to its economic laws would issue into peace; socialism maintained, not less rigorously, that the inevitable issue of these laws was revolution; but both were alike in teaching that the social problem was an economic problem, when in fact both were standing at the threshold of a new world which neither economic liberty nor economic determinism could interpret or control."

But the socialist faith—speaking more particularly of its later developments—is more than an economic scheme; it is an appeal to brotherhood, justice, and hope; and to many of its sympathizers its materialistic economics

of determinism has been more of a hindrance than a help. Perhaps before long it will be possible to idealize the socialistic movement into a moral awakening of responsibility for the just distribution of the products of industry.

Two of the most trenchant critics of the economics of their time were Carlyle and Ruskin. "Cash payment," said Carlyle, "never was, or could except for a few years be, the union-bond of man to man....If, at any time, a philosophy of *Laissez faire*...start up as the exponent of human relations, expect that it will soon end....The Laws of *Laissez faire*...will need to be remodelled and modified and rectified in a hundred ways....A man has other obligations laid on him, in God's Universe, than the payment of cash."

And Ruskin, over against a material science of economics, sets his doctrine of the spiritual nature of wealth. "A strange political economy," says he, "the only one, nevertheless, that ever was or can be: all political economy founded on self-interest being but the fulfilment of that which once brought schism into the Policy of angels, and ruin into the Economy of Heaven....Political economy...consists simply in the production and distribution...of useful and pleasurable things.

...It teaches nations to desire and labour for the things that lead to life; and...to scorn and destroy the things that lead to destruction.... That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings....*There is no wealth but life.* Life, including all its powers of love, of joy and of admiration....The persons themselves *are* the wealth....The true veins of wealth are purple,...the producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures....Among national manufactures, that of souls of a good quality may at last turn out a quite leadingly lucrative one."

But Carlyle and Ruskin were better at economic criticism than they were at economic creation; and when they undertook to construct an economic system to which modern business should conform, they failed. Carlyle advocated that industry should be ruled by strong men, to whom the mass of the workers were to render abject and permanent obedience—a just despotism, like that of a man-of-war. And Ruskin's principle of exchange was to ignore supply and demand, and to be simply and solely an exchange on the basis, not of cash or commodities, but of life-values. That is to say, if, for example, a blacksmith exerted

one-millionth of his total life-force in making me a horseshoe, I should let him have the product of one-millionth part of my life-force in return. Thus, Carlyle would abandon the modern movement of democracy, and revert to the feudalism of the middle ages; while Ruskin would base commercial exchange on the principle of human equality—where the life-force, say, of a hodman, is taken to be equal in value to the life-force of a Prime Minister.

Both Carlyle and Ruskin, however, though they failed in laying down the lines of a satisfactory economic system, agree that such a system is necessary to a satisfactory social scheme.

What are *our* conclusions on the matter? Let us try to set them down in order.

1. Economics is a science based upon fixed and unalterable laws. On that point there can be no two opinions; follow the precepts laid down, and material wealth will flow into the individual's and the nation's coffers. You remember the economic system outlined by an American writer? "Rise early. Go to bed late. Work every minute of the time you are awake. If you ever do aught for naught, do it for yourself. Live upon what you cannot sell. Never give a penny away. And if you do not die rich and go to Hell, you may sue me for

damages." Would it be too much to say that the economics of many people is an elaboration of Josh Billings's system of material self-interest? This do, and thou shalt live on the fat of the land.

But note that, inasmuch as social welfare is largely determined by material welfare, it is fitting that the work of social reconstruction should be undertaken by those alone who have made a previous study of economics, the *science* of material welfare.

2. But material welfare is only one factor in social welfare; it is possible to gain the whole world and lose one's own soul. And economics, though essential for social security, will not of itself suffice for social redemption. Indeed, there are many cases where material welfare should be sacrificed for that which is higher, the welfare of the moral nature.

3. As a *pure* science, we may say, economics is as unmoral as mathematics. Let it, however, when *applied* to human conditions, incorporate with it human emotions and sympathies; and it then becomes a moral science, with a wide appeal to man's whole nature. The social question thus becomes an ethical question; its branches stretch into every form of economic life, but its roots are in the soil of character, feeling, will.

4. Here, however, there is undoubtedly a danger from the action of the undisciplined conscience and uninstructed good intentions. But the remedy is a conscience disciplined and good intentions instructed.

## CHAPTER IV

## ETHICS. A GENERAL VIEW

A WAY over in China, a mother bought a pair of boots for her little daughter, and they fitted the tiny feet exactly. The child's feet grew, but not so the boots. What was the remedy? Well, it depended upon what one may term the philosophy of boots; and the Chinese philosophy of boots laid down a rigid rule that feminine foot-wear should be of a certain standard size, a child's size, irrespective of the age and development of the wearer. So flesh and sinew and bone were cramped and crushed in accordance with the tenets of the Chinese philosophy of boots.

We do not do this kind of thing in Britain. Here, when a girl gets too big for her boots, we buy her a larger pair, when we can afford it. We do this because our philosophy of boots is different from that of the Chinese; for we believe that the size of the foot-wear should conform to that of the foot—due allowance of course being made for the claims of feminine vanity.

Now ethics has for long been too much like the Chinese philosophy of boots. It has laid

down certain rigid rules, which it held to be applicable everywhere, always, and to everybody. And the dry-as-dust ethical philosopher, sitting, remote from life, among the cobwebs of his lonely study, formulated his abstract and speculative system, and said that it ought, as it were, to be clamped and rivetted upon every human foot.

But Western ideas on ethics should conform to Western ideas on boots. Due allowance should be made for different stages of development, whether of men or of nations; and the rules of school-boy conduct should not be the same as those, say, of the Nonconformist Conscience; neither should the Old Testament Jews be measured by the same standard as their twentieth century descendants. For life is not a fixed and finished fact; on the contrary, it is a process, a growth. Just so must it be with ethics, the science of conduct. "The study of life," it has been well observed, "must be itself alive. It is not concerned with fixed alternatives of duty, but with character in the making, with motives in motion, with the evolution of right desires, with the education of the will, with the conversion of an untrained and intermittent sense of duty into that disciplined character which the Christian apostle calls a good conscience."



To study ethics, therefore, the science of conduct, we must study it in motion, as a living, growing thing. "Forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forward unto those things that are before," is the true method of moral progress.

This primary trait of a real, live ethics, viz. its progressive character, its adaptability to the various stages of individual and national development, brings it into close relation with the social question; for this, too, is a real, live matter. Both, of course, have their ideals; but both should concern themselves mainly, not so much with an ideal state of affairs, a millennium of absolute perfection, but rather with the progress of imperfect beings under varying conditions. It has been said of certain Burmese philosophers, that they are accustomed to squat on their haunches the whole day long, smoke black cigars, and meditate on the mysteries of religion. But *we* believe that our philosophy should not consist of dreamy speculations, of abstract propositions, but rather of practical and conditional applications to the moving current of human affairs.

There is a second feature of ethics which confirms the impression of a special adaptation to the social question. Ethics is *itself* a social question. Just as you can, in thought,

isolate the "economic man," and study him as the instrument of economic laws, so you can isolate the "moral man," and study him too as the instrument of moral laws. But the economic man and the moral man are only fictions, for man is a complex creature, and cannot operate the different faculties of his complexity in, so to speak, water-tight compartments. Thus, conduct, with which the science of ethics immediately concerns itself, is complex; it cannot, as it were, work in a vacuum; it must move amongst, and act through, the facts of the social order; and, though ethics deals with the character of the individual, this character can only be developed through contact with society. Ethics, in fact, formulates the type of character which shall control conditions; social service brings about the social conditions which may fortify character.

These similarities between ethics and the social question lead us to inquire in further detail the nature of ethics, and its possible application to the problems of social life. Let us therefore, trying to avoid as far as possible all technical and abstract terms, endeavour to deal in simple language with the facts of familiar experience. And we will start with the progressive phases of a single normal life.

We will begin with the baby. What is *his* attitude towards the social order? It is a complete defiance, an assertion of absolute sovereignty, a bit of pure despotism; of all autocrats the child-in-arms is the most autocratic. He stretches out his hands for the moon, expects to get it, and yells when it is denied him. He takes himself as the centre around which every created thing must revolve, the hub of the universe; and everything that exists, exists for the sole purpose of ministering to his needs and pandering to his pleasure. Nothing else matters but his welfare. All's well with the world so long as he is comfortable; and when he suffers inconvenience, society is going to the dogs. If you want an example of unadulterated egotism, go to the chubby creature who comes to us—so the poet, basely fostering the maternal illusion, tells us—"trailing clouds of glory." Trailing clouds of glory, indeed! More true to nature it would have been to write "Stuffed with chunks of selfishness." No, the human animal is, at the beginning of his career, an out and out egotist.

Soon, however, the regulations of the social order start to wall in, with their obnoxious restrictions, the growing boy. He goes to school because he finds that the consequences of staying away are more painful than the ordeal

of contact with learning; he stops bullying when he finds that bullying doesn't pay; and he refrains from snatching and grabbing when he receives in sensitive portions of his own person the penalties which snatching and grabbing entail. Parents, teachers, and companions combine to "put him in his place," and, more or less, to keep him there. Kicking against the pricks is a stupid proceeding, whether in a Saul or a schoolboy; and the latter soon learns the stupidity of kicking against the pricks which an outraged society can and does inflict upon him. Accordingly, instead of defying the world, he now compromises with it. He still "goes for his rights" as much as he can, but he regretfully recognizes the fact that society insists upon his discharging certain duties in return. He acts in accordance with this unpleasant conviction; and his life is now one of self-interest tempered by expediency, not modified by principle. Thus, egotism may be said to be the babyhood, and expediency the youth, of morals.

Some people live their whole lives in the babyhood of morals; they are egotists in childhood, and they are still egotists in old age. Others, again, never get beyond the second stage, expediency, the youth of morals; they live a life of compromise, not of principle.

Perhaps it would not be too much to say that comparatively few reach the third stage, viz. that of moral maturity.

And what is the mark of moral maturity? It is a complete change of view-point. For whereas a life of egotism is a life of self-interest pure and simple; and a life of compromise is a life of self-interest tempered by expediency; moral maturity is a life of entire self-surrender. He who loses his life shall save it; loyalty is liberty; service is freedom; what could be more contradictory than a faith like this? Yet precisely this moral paradox has, throughout all history, opened the way to moral balance, efficiency, peace. And this moral paradox can be matched in the realm of inanimate nature; for, just as in morals we realize for ourselves by self-surrender the best we are capable of, so in the physical world we command nature by conforming to her laws—not by asserting our own arbitrary wills. I am loyal; I give myself to my cause; and by working for my cause I develop my highest powers—powers that would have slumbered and slept throughout a whole existence of self-interest. In this way it is more blessed to give than to receive; nay, it is not only more blessed, it is more profitable too; for, according to the law of spiritual economics, the man who gives

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himself to his cause, receives himself back again, with his horizon extended, his outlook brightened by spiritual radiance, his whole being raised, ennobled, purified.

The way, then, to moral maturity is by the path of loyalty—that is to say a willing, thorough-going, and practical devotion of a person to a cause. First there must *be* a cause; second it must be embraced willingly; and third the devotion must be expressed in a sustained and practical way. Instances of loyalty are: the devotion of a patriot to his country, when such devotion leads him actually to live, and perhaps to die, for her; the devotion of a martyr to his religion; the devotion of a ship's captain to the requirements of his office, so that, in order to save his crew, he will be the last man to leave the ship, and will, at need, die at his post; the devotion of a scholar to truth, so that he gladly suffers persecution rather than promulgate, or even countenance, a lie; the devotion of a merchant to the rightful functions of his business, so that, in order to supply a good commodity at a just price, he will even dare financial ruin. These cases are typical; but they all involve the three requirements of being willing, thorough-going, and practical.

But now comes the crucial question: Where,

in our distracted world, with its multiplicity of causes, many of them warring with each other, am I to find a cause around which I may centralize my life? Here, for instance, is a short list for consideration: vaccination, anti-vaccination, woman's suffrage, local option, prohibition, housing, electoral reform, free-trade, protection, free meals for school children, football, horse-racing, making money, clothing clubs, penny-readings, water-supply, cottage gardens, hospitals, prisons, reformatories, pure literature, Mormonism, trade unions, guild socialism, nationalization of the railways, capturing foreign trade, bimetallism, national workshops, pensions, and perpetual motion. Such a list might be multiplied a hundredfold, and would show every gradation of cause from the utterly trivial to the imperatively vital. How, then, are we to make a choice?

1. Our cause should be something which we embrace *willingly*; because, not only does it strike us as being reasonable and just, but it also has something about it that appeals to our own particular brand of human nature.

2. It should be something that embodies as its prime motive or motives some principle or principles of the morality recognized in civilized countries.



Now suppose we embark upon one particular cause, and that the prime motive power of this is one particular principle of morality; in so far as we serve this cause faithfully we are serving the cause of morality, *and the cause of morality should be the cause around which we centralize our lives*. Necessarily, we thus serve it in a fragmentary form, but we *do* serve it all the same. In being loyal to the cause of morality, therefore, we may say, in the words of that distinguished American, Professor Royce, "all those duties which we have learned to recognize as the fundamental duties of the civilized man, are to be rightly interpreted as special instances of loyalty."

"Consider," says the same authority, "the best-known facts as to the indirect influence of certain forms of loyal conduct. When I speak the truth, my act is directly an act of loyalty to the personal tie which then and there binds me to the man to whom I speak. My special cause is, in such a case, constituted by this tie. My fellow and I are linked in a certain unity—the unity of some transaction which involves our speech one to another. To be ready to speak the truth to my fellow is to have, just then, no eye to see and no tongue to speak save as this willingly accepted tie demands. In so far, then, speaking the truth



is a special instance of loyalty. But whoever speaks the truth, thereby does what he then can do to help everybody to speak the truth. For he acts so as to further the general confidence of man in man. How far such indirect influence may extend, no man can predict.

“Precisely so, in the commercial world, honesty in business is a service, not merely and not mainly to the others who are parties to the single transaction in which at any one time this faithfulness is shown. The single act of business fidelity is an act of loyalty to that general confidence of man in man upon which the whole fabric of business rests. On the contrary, the unfaithful financier whose disloyalty is the final deed that lets loose the avalanche of a panic, has done far more harm to public confidence than he could possibly do to those whom his act directly assails. Honesty, then, is owed not merely and not mainly to those with whom we directly deal when we do honest acts; it is owed to mankind at large, and it benefits the community and the general cause of commercial loyalty.

“What holds thus of truthfulness and of commercial honesty holds, I assert, of every form of dutiful action. Each such form is a special means for being, by a concrete deed, loyal to loyalty.”

## CHAPTER V

## EGOISM

IN the previous chapter we have traced the successive steps by which morality develops in the individual life. These are:

1. Egotism—self-interest pure and simple.
2. Compromise—self-interest tempered by expediency.
3. Moral maturity—devotion to a cause the prime motive or motives of which is or are a principle or principles of morality.

These successive steps we will now term:

1. Egoism.
2. Prudentialism.
3. Idealism.

Now just as there are three successive stages in the evolution of individual morality, so there have been three successive systems or schools in the evolution of moral science; and what the individual illustrates in the course of his moral growth, history reports as the evolution of systematic morality. As set forth by successive masters, ethics thus reproduces in doctrine what personal experience exhibits in phases of life; and each of these successive steps in moral progress has at one time been

accepted as the last word. Egoism, Prudentialism, and Idealism: these three schools of opinion represent in the main the theories or conduct which philosophy has formulated.

Let us take Hobbes as the representative of Egoism not as a practical rule of life which one is ashamed to profess, but as a philosophy of which the philosopher professes himself to be justly proud. "Of the voluntary acts of every man," says he, "the object is some good to himself." And again, "When a man deliberates whether he shall do a thing or not do it...he does nothing else but consider whether it be better for himself to do it or not to do it." What? Are all a man's acts entirely and inevitably selfish? They are, says Hobbes; there is no escape from such a state of affairs. We *must* be selfish, whether we like it or not; for, just as gravitation is a fixed and unalterable law of material nature, so selfishness is a fixed and unalterable law—the prime one too—of human nature. Thus, according to Hobbes, there is no such thing as social obligation; we owe a duty to ourselves, not to others; self-interest is the basic law of conduct; and all so-called unselfish, altruistic motives are but masks worn by self-interest.

Nietzsche, with his "will to power," follows Hobbes as an advocate of out-and-out,

thorough-going egoism, both for the individual person and for the individual State. Wrong notions about weakness, he says, have resulted in a slave-morality; and the most degenerate outcome of this creed has been the Christian religion, with its praise of humility, sympathy, and sacrifice. "Life," he tells us, "is essentially the appropriation, the injury, the subduing of the alien and weak." And again, "What is happiness? It is the feeling that power increases—that resistance has been overcome. Not contentment, but more power; not peace, but war; not virtue, but efficiency. ...The weak and crippled should go to the wall: that is the first principle of our philosophy. And one should help them to go.... One must learn to love oneself...with a wholesome and healthy love, so that one is sufficient to oneself, and does not run about in ways which are described as love of one's neighbour." Thus, according to Nietzsche, the survival of the fit is as inevitable in social as in physical life, and to check the action of this principle by any sacrifice of the strong for the weak is to obstruct social progress.

Nietzsche's egoism is just an application to human life of the principle of natural selection. But are we nothing more than animals, contending in the struggle for existence from

which is to emerge the master-race? Or was Huxley right when he said: "Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and the substitution for it of another which may be called the ethical process; the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest, in respect of the whole of the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically best"? And was Fiske right when he said: "When humanity began to be evolved, an entirely new chapter in the history of the universe was opened. Henceforth the life of the nascent soul came to be first in importance, and the bodily life became subordinate to it"?

Natural selection! Let us consider it a little further. Away out in a certain jungle grew many thousands of plants. Each of them was engaged in a never-ending struggle for existence, a struggle where kindness and mercy and self-sacrifice were unknown, but where power was the only factor of well-being—the power to exist. Those plants that were the best fitted to deal with jungle conditions survived; those that were least fitted to deal with jungle conditions perished. And so not only individual plants, but whole species, died out, and made way for others that were more in harmony with their environment, the environment

of the jungle. Thus, the weakest went to the wall; there was no escaping the process; it was in accordance with the laws of nature, jungle nature, and these are inexorable—in the jungle.

By and by, however, there came into this jungle a man who set about the task of making for himself a garden. First he erected a strong, high boundary fence; and from the space enclosed he removed every plant that grew therein. Then he dug the soil, and sowed the seeds of the crops he wished to rear. To these he gave the special cultivation their needs demanded, taking care, moreover, to protect them from the encroachments of the surrounding vegetation; and so in this way it came about that there sprang up in the heart of the jungle a garden.

Observe that both the jungle-plants and the crops of the garden came to maturity by the operation of natural laws. But there was this big difference between them: *the jungle-plants thrive under jungle conditions; the garden crops thrive under garden conditions.*

For Nietzsche and his school, society is a jungle, where power, not moral goodness, is the thing that counts; leave the jungle conditions alone, say they, and let them work out the evolution of the super-man.

But the message of the ethical idealist is this: *make garden conditions for your society.*

In a sewer the rat will survive, because he is rapacious, unscrupulous, foul-feeding; and because, in sewer conditions, these are the qualities which enable their possessor to succeed in the struggle for existence. And in a sewer-like state of society, the rat-like individual will flourish; because he too is rapacious, unscrupulous, and feeds upon the exploitation, the labour and suffering, of others. But alter the conditions of society, and you alter the character of the fittest survivor; you step from a jungle into a garden. When society becomes what it really should be, it is the *ethically* best who will survive. +

But we must not forget that self-interest has its uses. It is a fact of nature; it must be utilized; it must be developed. And the single self may be divided into three constituents, viz. the Material Me, the Social Me, and the Spiritual Me.

(1) Of the Material Me, the body, is the innermost part. The clothes come next. After these, our immediate family is a part of ourselves; our father and mother, wife and children, are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; when they die, a part of our very selves is gone; if they sin, it is our shame; if they are insulted,

Col 2 - Self as an affection of things



our anger flashes forth. Our home comes next; its scenes are a part of our life; its aspects awaken our tenderest affection. An equally instinctive impulse drives us to collect property, and those parts of our wealth are most intimately ours which are the products of our own labour.

(2) A man's Social Me is the recognition which he gets from his mates. By nature we are gregarious, and like to get ourselves noticed—and noticed favourably—by our fellows. "No more fiendish punishment," says William James, "could be devised, were such a thing physically possible, than that one should be turned loose in society and remain absolutely unnoticed by all the members thereof. If no one turned round when we entered, answered when we spoke, or minded what we did, but if every person we met cut us dead, and acted as if we were non-existing things, a kind of rage and impotent despair would ere long well up in us, from which the cruellest bodily tortures would be a relief; for these would make us feel that, however bad might be our plight, we had not sunk to such a depth as to be unworthy of attention at all."

(3) The Spiritual Me is the totality of a man's thinking, feeling, will—with special reference, not to his material claims, not to his social



claims, but to his dealings with spiritual forces, his progress towards perfection of soul.

Now there will always be a rivalry and conflict between the different Me's; and I will close my remarks on egoism by two quotations bearing on the point, one from James, the other from Peabody. "With most objects of desire," says the former, "physical nature restricts our choice to but one of many represented goods, and even so it is here. I am often confronted by the necessity of standing by one of my empirical selves and relinquishing the rest. Not that I would not, if I could, be both handsome and fat and well dressed, and a great athlete, and make a million a year, be a wit, a *bon-vivant*, and a lady-killer, as well as a philosopher, a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, and African explorer, as well as a tone-poet and saint. But the thing is simply impossible. The millionaire's work would run counter to the saint's; the *bon-vivant* and the philanthropist would trip each other up; the philosopher and the lady-killer could not well keep house in the same tenement of clay. Such different characters may conceivably at the outset of life be alike possible to a man. But to make any of them actual, the rest must be more or less suppressed. So the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must review the list carefully, and

pick out the one on which to stake his salvation. All other selves thereupon become unreal, but the fortunes of this self are real. Its failures are real failures, its triumphs real triumphs, carrying shame and gladness with them."

"Within the single self," says Peabody, "there are several selves—a Natural Me, a Social Me, and a Spiritual Me—and the question of a rational egoism is: which self am I? Is it the self which I may outgrow, or is it the self which I may attain? To free the higher self from the domination of the lower self; this process may itself leave one within the limits of a philosophy of egoism, but it is none the less the essential starting-point on the way to moral maturity."

## CHAPTER VI

## PRUDENTIALISM

LET us now turn our attention to the next step in moral progress; let us briefly consider the philosophy of Prudentialism. We will take Bentham as a representative exponent. "Weigh pains," says he, "weigh pleasures; and as the balance stands, will stand the question of right and wrong. Vice may be defined to be a miscalculation of chances: a mistake in estimating the value of pleasures and pains. It is false moral arithmetic." And Mill summarizes this view as follows: "Bentham's idea of the world," he tells us, "is that of a collection of persons pursuing each his separate interest or pleasure, and the prevention of whom from jostling one another more than is unavoidable, may be attempted by hopes and fears derived from three sources—the law, religion, and public opinion." Thus, in Prudentialism there are two factors to be considered—my own happiness, and the happiness of society; and the balance between them is purely a matter of expediency.

Herbert Spencer, another Prudentialist,

puts life before happiness as the thing to be striven for. With him, the primary instinct is the instinct to live; the first test of conduct is its contribution to life—not length alone, however, but length multiplied by quality. “An oyster,” says he, “may live longer than a cuttle-fish...but the sum of vital activities is far less in the oyster than in the cuttle-fish.” And Tennyson expresses the same idea in his line, “Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.” Thus conduct is again a matter of moral arithmetic, and anything that increases life—length multiplied by quality—is good.

There is no doubt that prudentialism is a great step in the evolution of morality; and the nature of such a step may be seen from a consideration of a little example. Two men, let us say, one of whom is a pure egoist and the other a pure prudentialist, decide to set up business, and to carry on that business strictly according to the tenets of their respective creeds. The egoist opens his shop, and stands awaiting developments. In front of him is his counter; behind him are shelves—empty, every one of them. Presently there enters a prospective customer, and something like the following dialogue takes place:

CUSTOMER. What have you got to sell?

EGOIST. Nothing.

CUSTOMER. Then why are you here?

EGOIST. To receive your money.

CUSTOMER. But am I to get no return for what I hand over to you?

EGOIST. None whatever. I always take everything for myself; and I never, by any chance, return an equivalent to anybody. No, not even a smile.

Now if the customer were an absolute altruist, he might possibly empty his pockets, and place the contents at the disposal of the absolute egoist. But every slap we receive in infancy knocks some of the egoism out of us; and even before he can lisp his first incoherence, the child has begun to be a bit of a prudentialist; we are all egoists by fits and starts, but not "whole-hoggers." Perhaps the nearest approach that is ever made to such a life is found in the twin professions of burglary and fraudulent company-promoting. As for absolute altruists, I question whether one could find a specimen outside the walls of an asylum.

And now take the case of the prudentialist trader. He, too, opens his shop. In front of him is *his* counter, and behind him are his shelves as before, but this time stocked with goods. Enter a customer; when, if only the prudentialist be candid and truthful, something like the following dialogue may conceivably ensue:

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CUSTOMER. What have you got to sell?

PRUDENTIALIST. Here is my stock. I am not like the man over the way. I let you have goods for your money.

CUSTOMER. But do you give money's worth?

PRUDENTIALIST. That depends very much upon the kind of man you are.

CUSTOMER. Please explain.

PRUDENTIALIST. For the money you hand over to me, I hand over to you the very smallest quantity of goods I can induce you to take in return.

CUSTOMER. But is that a just way of doing business?

PRUDENTIALIST. It is *my* way—take it or leave it. Do you think I am here to further *your* interests? Certainly not. I am here to further my own, simply and solely my own. I need your money. Very well. But, as it would not pay me to snatch it, I am compelled to compromise with you; and so I do not profess to give you what is just, but only what is expedient. Not justice, but expediency: that is my motto.

As for the idealist, he has a quite different tale to tell. We will let Ruskin tell it. "Five great intellectual professions, relating to daily necessities of life," says he, "have hitherto existed—three exist necessarily in every civilized nation:

The soldier's profession is to *defend* it.

The pastor's to *teach* it.

The physician's to *keep it in health*.

The lawyer's to *enforce justice* in it.

The merchant's to *provide* for it.

And the duty of all these men is, on due occasion, to *die* for it.

On due occasion, namely:

The soldier rather than leave his post in battle.

The physician, rather than leave his post in plague.

The pastor, rather than teach falsehood.

The lawyer, rather than countenance injustice.

The merchant—what is his due occasion of death?

“It is the main question for the merchant, as for all of us. For, truly, the man who does not know when to die, does not know how to live.

“Observe, the merchant's function (or manufacturer's, for in the broad sense in which it is here used the word must be understood to include both) is to provide for the nation. It is no more his function to get profit for himself out of that provision than it is a clergyman's function to get his stipend. This stipend is a due and necessary adjunct, but not the object of his life, if he be a true clergyman, any more than his fee (or honorarium) is the object of life to a true physician. Neither is his fee the object of life to a true merchant. All



three, if true men, have a work to be done irrespective of fee—to be done even at any cost, or for quite the contrary of fee; the pastor's function being to teach, the physician's to heal, and the merchant's, as I have said, to provide. That is to say, he has to understand to their very root the qualities of the thing he deals in, and the means of obtaining or producing it; and he has to apply all his sagacity and energy to the producing or obtaining it in perfect state, and distributing it at the cheapest possible price where it is most needed....

“Two main points he has in his providing function to maintain: first, his engagements (faithfulness to engagements being the real root of all possibilities in commerce); and, secondly, the perfectness and purity of the thing provided; so that, rather than fail in any engagement, or consent to any deterioration, adulteration, or unjust and exorbitant price of that which he provides, he is bound to meet fearlessly any form of distress, poverty, or labour, which may, through maintenance of these points, come upon him....

“All which sounds very strange: the only real strangeness in the matter being, nevertheless, that it should so sound. For all this is true, and that not partially nor theoretically, but everlastingly and practically: all other doctrine than

this respecting matters political being false in premises, absurd in deduction, and impossible in practice, consistently with any progressive state of national life; all the life which we now possess as a nation showing itself in the resolute denial and scorn, by a few strong minds and faithful hearts, of the economic principles taught to our multitudes, which principles, so far as accepted, lead straight to national destruction."

We see, therefore, according to Ruskin:

The soldier should be an idealist. His one ideal should be to defend his country.

The pastor should be an idealist. His one ideal should be to teach truth.

The physician should be an idealist. His one ideal should be to keep the people in health.

The lawyer should be an idealist. His one ideal should be to enforce justice.

The merchant should be an idealist. His one ideal should be to provide good commodities at a just price.

And what is true of the five great intellectual professions, holds equally true in every department of life. In all, idealism, not a prudentialism based upon compromise and expediency, is the true road to economic, social, national well-being.

But at present, prudentialism is undoubtedly the philosophy of the average man; he holds it as the only practicable creed in the everyday routine of life. And yet even the most prudential of prudentialists does not *always* carry out his doctrine to its logical conclusion; for occasions arise when he feels himself compelled to cast his philosophy to the winds, and confess that it cannot, must not, be allowed to regulate the *whole* of life. Goldsmith was expressing prudential views when he wrote:

He who fights and runs away,  
May live to fight another day;  
But he who is in battle slain  
Can never rise and fight again.

But there are times when even the most cool and calculating of prudentialists would not, could not, run away, even though he knew that to stand fast meant death. History abounds with instances of men and women who have sacrificed their all, gladly and spontaneously, for their ideal, the cause in which they had enlisted; and there are many heroes and heroines in humble life, who, though their deeds will never be known outside the narrow circle in which they move, yet equally deserve to have their names recorded in the "blazing scroll of fame." Prudentialism would say that this heroism was moonlight madness; yet in our

inmost hearts we know that it was the manifestation of a higher law than prudentialism. The fact of the matter is that prudentialism, though it is at home on the plains, does not know its way among the hills. At the call of heroism, the future is sacrificed, expediency perishes, quality is everything and quantity is nothing; indeed, life would be intolerable if it were haunted by the remembrance of some great opportunity lost, a moral crisis shunned. Heroism hears a voice, and obeys; to disobey would be the act of a recreant.

What is this new principle of conduct which now appears? It is the principle of ethical idealism, moral maturity—faithfulness to an ideal of duty, loyalty to one's vocation, one's country, one's God; and, be it remembered, *an ideal is an unrealized perfection*. "The flag of one's country," says Peabody, "for example, is not the symbol of one's real country, with its follies and sins, its politics and trade, but the symbol of one's ideal country, the nation which is as yet nothing but a hope; yet, in the presence of this symbol of an ideal, this witness of a dream, many a man has found it perdition to be safe, and a joy to die. The Kingdom of God for which Christians pray is not a perfect world which actually exists, or is ever likely to exist; yet the Christian Church

survives by faith in that ideal, and is nurtured by that prayer. It is the same with each humble act of moral heroism.... Each social problem,—the family, the industrial order, and the State—would repeat the story of the moral process, and report once more the same struggle of moral types, and the gradual emergence, through self-interest and expediency, of a practical and constructive faith in ethical idealism.”

## CHAPTER VII

## IDEALISM

EGOISM, as we have seen, has a limited vision; but that vision is clear. It sees, plainly and distinctly, certain practical ends—which it means to attain quite irrespective of what other people may think, say, or do. It has no use for big horizons; for it, the stars do not exist; and it looks at everything, as it were, through a microscope.

Prudentialism is commercial, and has an appearance of practical sagacity; compromise and expediency are its watchwords. Its outlook is wider than that of egoism; in this respect we may say that it discards the use of the microscope, and relies on the unaided eye.

Both egoism and prudentialism profess to deal with hard, solid facts; but, for the most part, they are facts either of the moment or of the immediate future.

What shall we say about idealism? Is it merely a subject for the calm and lonely heights of philosophy? Is it quite out of place in the hurry and rush of everyday life? Well, in respect of vision, the idealist possesses an

instrument to which neither the egoist nor the prudentialist can lay claim; he can look at things through a telescope. Having thus seen the ends afar—to which both egoist and prudentialist are blind—he is free to attempt the gaining of them by the microscopic method of the former and the unaided eye of the latter.

Or we might say that the idealist is like one who climbs a mountain. The topmost peak may be inaccessible, but as the climber ascends his horizon widens, and the tangle of life is seen in commanding perspective; there is a meaning in it. Idealism is thus, not illusion, but perspective; and, having gained his perspective, the idealist can descend into the arena of his everyday task—where all his work will now have an intelligent and intelligible meaning.

For both egoist and prudentialist, in their reflective moods, life often seems but a mill-horse round, a treadmill; the question arises—what is all this for, and what world-purpose does it serve?—and the multitudinous incidents of existence appear like random dots on a sheet of paper. But the idealist neither walks in a circle nor marks time on a treadmill; he moves ever forward towards the goal of his ideal; and, for him, the dots which indicate

the events of life are arranged in one whole, regular, systematic pattern.

And the moral process is by no means unique; on the contrary, it is matched in other departments of human experience. Thus, goodness, truth, beauty, each has its ideal, without which it could not thrive. But remember that these are ideals, not attainments.

Unmixed goodness is the ideal of the moralist.

Absolute truth is the ideal of the scholar.

Perfect beauty is the ideal of the artist.

Now neither the moralist, the scholar, nor the artist *begins* with an ideal, but each has his proper evolution. The moralist, as we have seen, passes through egoism and prudentialism to idealism; and it is interesting and suggestive to note that both the scholar and the artist develop on the same lines, the lines of moral progress. So that science and art are correlated with morality; neither can exist without a basis of morality; and Emerson was right when he said, "Duty is one thing with science, with beauty, and with joy."

The scholar passes through egoism—truth for what it will bring him, he defies the world; prudentialism—truth that will aid him in his life of expediency and compromise, he adjusts himself to the world; idealism—truth for



truth's sake. And what has been said of the scholar holds equally true, with a change of terms, for the artist; he, too, follows the inevitable law of moral development, viz. from egoism to prudentialism, and from prudentialism to idealism.

Thus, if we take the scholar to represent the intellect, the artist to represent the emotions, and the moralist to represent the will, we find that the law of moral development runs through the whole of the life of mind; it is a fact of human nature.

Being thus a fact of human nature, it applies, not only to individual cases, but also to bodies, classes, organizations of individual cases; these, too, have their order of development through egoism and prudentialism to idealism; and such development must be fully recognized in any satisfactory scheme of social reconstruction. Let us see how the process works in a few of the bodies, classes, organizations into which society aggregates itself.

First let us take the unit of civilization, the family. Originally, the prime motive which led to the institution of this relationship was egoism, self-interest pure and simple. In order to gratify his own desires, and generally to further his own individual welfare, the strong man, by virtue of his strength, took to himself

a wife. Both wife and children were his own undisputed property, his goods and chattels, his slaves, who existed simply and solely for his gratification and comfort. They had no rights of their own; but their lord and master claimed from them many and various duties, and enforced the performance of these duties by the weight of his heavy hand; if he wanted two, three, half-a-dozen wives, he simply annexed and subjugated them; and whether he treated these his dependants cruelly or kindly was a matter for his temperament, his whim, his caprice.

By and by, however, public opinion changed; and the women and children began to come into their own, but slowly. Rights were gradually, and grudgingly, conferred upon them; and they had now something wherewith to bargain. "Respect our rights," they said, "and, on condition that you respect the rights you owe to us, we will perform the duties we owe to you." Thus, from the pure self-interest, the unadulterated egoism, of the primeval head of the family, there emerged a conflict of self-interests; and this resulted in a compromise, a contract; you do this, and I'll do that; if you don't do this, I won't do that. Each party to such a bargain tried hard to further its own immediate self-interest, and was only

restrained from going to the logical lengths of egoism by the question of expediency. In this manner, family relationships began to be regulated and governed by the spirit of prudentialism.

But is this the final step? Can no further word be said? Am I to regard the family merely as an instrument for my own self-interest?—which is egoism. Am I to regard it as a clashing and conflict of self-interests resulting in a compromise, a bargain?—which is prudentialism. Or is there another and better way of viewing the question? I think there is; it is the view expressed by ethical idealism. I give myself to my family, and by loving it and working for it I find my deepest and best self; by losing myself I find myself. Thus, there arises a competition, not of getting but of giving—which is the very nucleus of idealism.

Now there has for some time been a cry that the bonds which bind the family together are loosening; the very institution itself is said to be in danger. The bonds will remain loose, and the institution will continue in danger, or worse, unless and until family relationships are bound by an ever-enduring tie, are made to rest upon the foundations of a stable peace. Such a tie, such a peace, cannot be found in

the spirit of egoism, with its autocracy of self and the smouldering discontent of other selves. Neither can they be found in the warring interests of prudentialism. But they are present where the idealist motto of "each for all and all for each" finds free play, and is the prime motive in the family.

Secondly, let us apply our law of moral development to the problem of charity. There are rich, and there are poor. How shall the rich help the poor? How shall those who have more than enough to supply their reasonable needs assist those who have less? Well, the rich may take up the attitude of egoism, and say: "Am I my brother's keeper? I owe a duty to myself, and to no other. Let the poor man feed himself, as I do." Or—extending the application of this attitude from individual cases to whole classes of society—how shall those classes which are more favourably placed help those who are not so fortunate? Egoism would reply that the weakest must go to the wall. But, acting upon this conviction, would not egoism defeat the very purpose for which it strove—the maintenance of its own material well-being? For hopeless poverty begets revolution; and the egoism of any well-placed class of society, as it were cuts the rope that binds it to security. No, if the strong would survive

in the social world, he must learn, in some measure, to serve.

Or another attitude towards the problem of charity might be that of prudentialism. If I am a rich landowner, and at my gates there is a cottage of which the unsanitary conditions are a menace to my health as I pass, prudentialism would lead me to change these conditions, and build something less fitted for a pig to dwell in. In this spirit, I might advocate housing-reform, the cleansing of the slums, the improvement of education, a crusade against tuberculosis, the suppressing of exploitation and sweating, government inspection of workshops—and all the time be animated by a motive which is nothing more than enlightened prudence. By making my person and property more secure, these things are good for *me*; as a prudentialist, that is why I advocate them; and I should certainly *not* advocate them if I did not believe that they would bring me and my class more good than harm. Regarded as a protective system, prudentialism, thus applied to the problem of charity, may carry a community a long way.

But relief, given solely because such relief pays the giver, is not really charity at all—in the New Testament meaning of the term; for it is not rooted in love; and a man may give

all his goods to feed the poor, without being animated by this, the crown of Christian virtues. Good will, sympathy, kindliness, brotherhood; these should be the motives of all relief of poor by rich, of ill-placed classes by those more fortunately situated. Such is the message of ethical idealism. It gives because it loves; and, inasmuch as love is accompanied by the gift of understanding, and, moreover, "never faileth," the work of charity can never be quite clearly conceived, and never placed upon firm and lasting foundations, until egoism and prudentialism are fulfilled in idealism.

*Now* Thirdly, let us apply ~~our law of moral development~~ to the problem of industrialism. The wages and hours of labour, the conditions under which labour should be carried on, the distribution of profits between capital and labour: these are questions of economics. But in what spirit are they to be settled? It is here that ethics steps in.

1. Are they to be settled in the spirit of egoism? In that case, note what follows: "I mean to take the lion's share of the profit," says capital; "I would take every penny, but unfortunately that is not feasible. In the matter of wages, personally, I would prefer to pay none; and I will take precious good care that I pay nothing more than necessity compels me to pay. Hours

of labour? Well, all I can say is that it is a pity they cannot be made to stretch the whole twenty-four hour day. As for my workshops, if they are unhealthy, thank goodness the weakest of the hands will die off, and I can get stronger ones in their place."

And labour is by no means behind in its claims. Its attitude towards the division of profits is exactly the same as that of capital; it will grab all it can; the wages-bill must be of such dimensions as to leave capital next to nothing as its share. The hours of labour must be diminished in the same proportion as the rate of wages is increased. And every workshop must be fitted up like a palace—with a spacious dormitory attached, to which the workman may retire and go to sleep on feather pillows when he feels tired.

In other words, the tiger of capital, cruel, wily, unscrupulous, fights for its own, and for its own alone; and the wild buffalo of labour, equally cruel, equally unscrupulous, and making up, by its massive, headlong rush for what it lacks in calculated cunning, does just the same. It is a class war, animated by the ethics of the baby, or the jungle.

Such, carried to its logical end, would be the effect that the spirit of egoism would produce in the industrial world. Happily, such



an utter reversion to primeval type is at the present time impossible. But egoism in industry, even to-day, is by no means completely discredited. Though curbed and modified by twentieth-century culture, it still exists; and, until it quite disappears, there can be no hope of industrial peace and social plenty.

2 The next step in the moralization of industry is prudentialism. The two opposing parties, though still frankly hostile, see that brute force does not pay. So they call calm reason to their aid, and enter upon negotiations. Arbitration now ensues, conciliation, and a nice balance of compromise and expediency. But note that this is not an industrial peace. On the contrary, it is a mere armistice, during which each of the belligerents is arming for a possible further fray. Acting upon the principle that he who would have peace must be prepared for war, capital and labour form themselves into bigger and bigger trusts, combines, trade-unions, federations, and what not; and these stand, like fierce hounds, ready to spring at each others' throats, and only restrained by the leash of worldly prudence. When that leash snaps—a happening of which modern industrial history gives us many examples—fierce, cruel, unscrupulous egoism once more runs

rampant; and the industrial truce ends in a class war.

3. From this industrial prudentialism, there is gradually emerging the third stage of moral progress, viz. that of industrial idealism. Just as it is now seen that States need not always be a number of hostile camps, but that they should be joined in a great League of Nations, each working for the good of all; so it is now beginning to be recognized that the different industrial forces must no longer be animated solely by self-interest, but—each discharging its proper function—must work for the welfare of society as a whole.

Thus, even in industry, there is coming to the front the doctrine of ethical idealism, the doctrine that the self-realization of each trade unit, each economic factor, must be attained through the service of the organic life of society as a whole. The miner, when he gets all he can by force is an egoist. When he gets all he can by diplomacy he is a prudentialist. When he sinks self, and lives for his Cause—which is the organized society wherein he dwells—he is an idealist; and, as an idealist, not only does he benefit the Cause for which he works, but he also benefits both his own higher nature and the truest interests of the miners as a whole. And what is true of the miner is equally true

of every form of labour and every application of capital.

Now the bed rock of all the virtues is justice, and the idealist who would do good work for society must base his efforts upon a just foundation. And I think it is quite fair to say that the Labour Movement is, in the main, an attempt to embody in industrial life the principle of justice. Of course, like every other stream of tendencies, it has its scum, its impurities; but, in the main, it says, "Justice is my plea." And, as justice is its ideal, it can be thoroughly understood and effectively promoted by none but idealists. "The future of civilization," says a modern writer, "will chiefly depend on the development in human society of the ethical idea of justice—a justice attained not by formal legislation, or considerations of self-interest, but by the recognition and respect in personal conduct of the equal rights of all other persons." So long, therefore, as the Labour Movement preserves its ideal of justice, we may have the best hopes for an abiding industrial peace.

Finally, there arises the vital question as to what stage of moral development we have reached in our public life, in the sphere of those larger interests with which one has to deal as the citizen of a modern State. As we

have seen that the only satisfactory solution of the problems of the individual, the family, the relief of the sick and poor, and industry, is to be found in ethical idealism, the same process of reasoning would lead us easily and inevitably to a similar conclusion in regard to public life; a moral motive should underlie public policy both in general scope and in individual detail. At the back of each and every action and line of action there should be the consideration, not of self-interest, not of expediency, but of right and justice administered in a spirit of warm and intimate brotherhood.

"The expansion," says Professor Henry Jones, in his *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, "of the range of ethical responsibility; the greater complexity of the modern State; the deeper implication of the lives of the individual citizens therein; the increase in the variety of its functions, and therefore in its capacity either for mischief or for good; its more democratic character, which subjects it only to its own caprice, and with the removal of external restraints makes inner restraints imperative; the irrelevance of the individualism of the past to its more highly organic character,...all these things taken together constitute a reason, which is also a necessity, for the earnest questioning of our ideals of life."

## CHAPTER VIII

## MORAL SELF-DEVELOPMENT

HERE am I, a living combination of body, mind, and soul or spirit. Before me lies a photograph of myself taken ten years ago. When I compare this with my reflection in a mirror, I see that I am not the same man that I was then. In ten years more I shall have changed once again. Body develops; so does mind; so does soul. In this chapter we shall treat more especially of soul—of moral development.

Character is said to be the product of two factors, nature and nurture, inner endowment and outward conditions; and just as two seedlings, growing side by side, under the same outward conditions of climate and soil, may, by virtue of the different qualities of their life-force, grow up, one into a rose, the other into a violet; so two children, brought up in the same street, and under the same outward conditions of nourishment and training may, by virtue of the different qualities of their life-force, become one a judge the other a criminal.

Of these two factors, inner endowment and outward conditions, it would be hard to say

which is the greater; without controversy, we will let it rest at that.

As regards the latter, viz. outward conditions, it is sometimes said that the individual himself cannot fairly be held responsible for them; but this statement needs some qualification. Many a man has lapsed into penury because he refused to exert himself to keep out of it; and he himself has thus largely produced the dismal outward conditions under which he groans. If our surroundings are uncongenial, why not change them? Far more frequently than people suppose, such a line of action is quite open to enterprise and pluck. A man is not responsible for the rain, but he *is* responsible for his umbrella.

Now, though development doubtless goes on under the pressure of outward conditions, and without the person himself taking a conscious hand in the process, we will deal with it here under its other aspect; we will speak of development *of* a self *by* a self. Bearing this limitation in mind, we may truly say that self-development is reached only when the individual tries to regulate his life by his own judgment, and in the light of a moral ideal which he has consciously made his own.

You remember St Paul's pronouncement, "The truth shall make you free." There is a

profound truth in *that*. The man with a moral ideal—which is the truth for *him*—is no longer a slave to convention, to tradition, to authority; but, unfettered by these shackles, he has, and exercises, a free choice as to how he may best pursue the end he has in view. This does not necessarily imply revolt; for convention, tradition, authority, are often based on conceptions which do not contradict his ideals; and it is only when such a contradiction takes place that revolt becomes imperative.

I do such and such a thing because it is customary—that is convention.

I do it because it has been customary in the past—that is tradition.

I do it because some person, or body of persons, tells me to do it—that is authority.

I do it because I myself think it is the best thing to do; because it agrees with the plan of life I have set myself deliberately to follow—a plan of life which is based upon the Vision that has been vouchsafed to me, the moral ideal I have consciously made my own. That is ethical idealism; for it, there are no such things in life as casual and disconnected events; every act is a step towards the End I have in view.

Now by following my moral ideal I advance in moral growth; for morality is an art; and the artist improves by practice. But my ideal



advances too—changes, broadens, deepens, developes. A child's ideal is never the same as that of an adult. The romantic visions inspired by story-books and youthful hero-worship pass away, and give place to the homely demands of daily life, and, later, to the sterner calls of social duty and public life. So that what once satisfied me, now satisfies me no longer; and, leaving the things that are behind, I press on to those which are before.

3. Most men's ideals have frequently two faults: they are narrow, and they are fragmentary. In regard to narrowness, take as an example the ideal of a happy home. How vastly this varies in different cases! For a savage, it means little else than shelter and food; while the civilized man looks for very many more things than these; and, as the civilized man developes, he is continually adding to his conception a growing number of refinements and spiritual graces. What is thus true of the ideal of a happy home is just as true of other ideals.

(1) How shall narrowness of ideal be remedied?

(a) By recourse to the larger life revealed in literature. "There is no stronger plea for biography, drama, or romance," says Dr MacCunn, in his book *The making of Character*, "or for any imaginative expansion of interests, than that founded upon the need for them as

correctives of the pitiable contractedness of outlook begotten of division of labour. The result no doubt may have its incongruities. The ideal outlook may be so big: the working life so small. Hence the notion, not uncommon, that popular education in a nation ruled by specialization, is a cause of discontent and embitterment. This is at most a fractional truth. The other side of it is, that from this imaginative contact with lives quite other than its own, the mind may come back with a juster and an enriched view of the manifold ways in which Duty fulfils itself through the diverse capacities and diverse opportunities of men. It is not needful perhaps to be hard upon those who, as they read of achievement that is not destined to be theirs, cannot smother the corrosive thought of the poverty of their own lot. But the better, and the more human, reflection is that Moral Law is so great a thing that it needs for its realization the many modes of many lives; and that it is entirely possible to rise to an intense sympathetic interest in other lives—lives which after all are linked to ours by the organic bonds of social life. Nor need the result be thus impersonal. Many an end really within the individual's reach is never grasped simply because it is concealed by the screen of removable ignorance; and many a

man in later years can, with bitter, unavailing regret, see clearly that his whole career might have been different, if only this end or that had been brought within his ken by the written or the spoken word."

(1) But there is a second way by which narrowness of ideal may be remedied; and that is by actual contact with social, political, and religious life. Indeed it is not by books or words that the outlook is most efficiently broadened and enriched; for these are only too apt to remain unfruitful notions—buds of theory that never bloom into the flower of practice. Get the notions by all means; but, as William James tells us, *it is action that gives the set to character*; and the sphere for action consists of the enlarging experiences of citizenship, and the influence of those social, political, and religious organizations that constrain their members to live for corporate and distant ends.

We might sum up these remedies for narrowness of ideal in two useful life-rules:

(1) Enlarge and enrich your ideal by contact with literature.

(2) Enlarge and enrich your ideal by actively participating in life—family life, social life, political life, and religious life.

(2) But our ideals are often fragmentary; and, worse than that, these fragments are often

quite contradictory. In Charles Reade's story *It is never too late to mend*, the brutal governor of the gaol is deeply moved by the cruelties depicted in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; he has one ideal as to conduct towards prisoners, and a quite contradictory one as to conduct towards slaves. Many a kind and sympathetic father has, in business, a heart of flint. And dishonesty in money-making has been known to go side by side with deep religious zeal. Would it be too much to say that, with the great mass of mankind, there are as many separate and distinct ideals as there are separate and distinct interests—and, moreover, that these separate and distinct ideals sometimes give to each other the lie direct?

How may this fragmentary state of affairs be remedied?

(a) By adopting a Moral Code which embodies in its decalogue, or other table of the law, the cardinal virtues of life. But Moral Codes have certain defects.

(i) They give commandments, but do not supply the will to carry them out; and, by itself, moral exhortation is but a weak weapon.

(ii) They are seldom systematic. They give precepts but do not rank them in the order of their importance. Neither do they contemplate cases where it is impossible to keep one

without breaking another. Take, for instance, the two precepts "Thou shalt not kill," and "Thou shalt not steal": the one enforcing the sacredness of life, the other the sacredness of property. These may conflict, have often conflicted. To protect property, do not men, with no compunction of conscience, take life? To preserve life, do they not, in sore need, take property? "Here," says Dr MacCunn, "the code fails us. We need some principle of arrangement; in default of which we are driven to ask that most natural of questions: Which is the greatest commandment?"

~~(6)~~ They have a tendency to become stereotyped and rigid. Maybe they covered the whole of experience at the time they were formulated; but, since then, life has become much more complex. The attempt to work out a body of authoritative moral precepts in detail, so as to show that every case of conduct, actual or possible, may consistently find its place under one or another of such precepts, has given rise to the system of Casuistry; and, whatever good may be said of Casuistry, we cannot escape the fact that, on the whole, the term has got a bad name.

~~(4)~~ The fragmentary nature of one's ideals may be remedied—one's ideals may be unified—by reference to the personal life of a

Hero, a Type, in whom the cardinal virtues are embodied; and, for many men, the solution of all problems is found in judging as they think their chosen Hero, or Type, would judge. But there are drawbacks to this method.

(a) The Hero, or Type, is never placed in quite the same circumstances as we ourselves are placed—he may belong to another race, another century, and so on—consequently, if we embodied his actions in our own lives, *they would not fit*.

(b) Where our Hero-worship embraces more than one Hero, there is often an antagonism in their characteristics. Moreover, in a multiplicity of Heroes there is no unity of ideal.

(c) To understand a Hero, or Type, needs imagination and sympathy; and the very many people who lack these requisites will never be able satisfactorily to mould their lives on that of the Person they have chosen as a pattern. Teachers of Christianity often find it one of the hardest tasks to bring their hearers to enter, with a real insight, into the record of the life of its Founder; for them, the figure of Jesus is but a vague, formless shadow, and no distinct and living reality.

(d) The appeal of a Hero, or Type, presupposes in those to whom it is addressed a

responsive principle of moral life, in the absence of which the example could not be interpreted aright. No man, we are told, is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*; and so, to the people who belong to the *valet-de-chambre* type, the really heroic has little or no appeal; it is very much like casting pearls before swine.

(3) The fragmentary nature of one's ideals may be remedied by forming a conception of the supreme End of life, and moulding one's conduct upon that. It is thus that one may escape from slavery to the rigidity of Codes and the limitations of example. Did not the Founder of Christianity sum up the Commandments, the whole duty of man, in the great ideal of love? If we only love well enough, says St Augustine, we may do what we will. For then our will is necessarily Good; and, Kant tells us, the only characteristic of human nature which is good always, everywhere, and for all men, is Good Will.



## CHAPTER IX

## RELIGION

AS one applies the principles of ethical idealism to the problems of the Social Question, is one not thereby passing the bounds of ethics and entering into the province of religion? As a matter of fact, is not social reconstruction a bit of practical religion?

Many devout people, however, object to such a view. Religion, they hold, is the force that binds man to God, and concerns itself, primarily, with redemption and worship; and, though philanthropic deeds may legitimately be termed the flower of religion, one must not detach them from their spiritual roots; philanthropy should not be a substitute for faith, but rather an expression of it.

But many social reformers are equally emphatic in their objections; for, with them, religion is something superfluous and unreal. It is, they say, good deeds that count; and they can get these without calling in the aid of any force outside the natural man; indeed, if philanthropy be likened to a flower, its roots are in human nature, not in religion.

~~Is there no way of bridging the gulf that~~

~~divides these opposing opinions? Let us consider the question.~~

You remember the character in Molière's comedy who, all his life, had talked prose without being aware of it. Well, maybe the social reformers who say they have no use for religion, maybe they, too, are religious without being aware of it.

In his Introduction to *Hiawatha*, Longfellow has the following suggestive passage:

In even savage bosoms  
There are longings, yearnings, strivings  
For the good they comprehend not.  
The feeble hands and helpless,  
Groping blindly in the darkness,  
Touch God's right hand in that darkness  
And are lifted up and strengthened.

From which passage it would appear that the pursuit of that which is good will bring men into contact with God—no matter how blind may be one's perceptions as to the nature of the process, and no matter what opinions one may hold as to the nature, or no-nature, of God.

A certain captain, who had lost his bearings, found that his water-butts were empty, and he and his crew were in danger of dying from thirst. At that critical juncture another ship hove in sight. When it came within speaking-distance, this dialogue ensued:

"Give us fresh water. We haven't a drop on board."

"Then dip down your buckets, and bail up."

Without knowing it, that thirst-stricken vessel was at that moment sailing, not upon the briny deep, but in the great estuary of a South American river. If, then, the message in Longfellow be true, the inference is that any man, by seeking, and acting upon, that which he believes to be good, may be, nay, actually is, as it were sailing in the waters of religion without knowing it. Is the message true? Does the inference hold good? Let us enquire.

1. If religion means communion with God, coming in contact with Him, touching His right hand, what are the paths by which such communion, such contact, may be reached? As the human mind is a tripartite unity of intellect, emotion, and will, these three parts of our nature are inevitably indicated as the paths in question. So that

1. One may find communion, get into contact, with God through the medium of the intellect;

2. One may find communion, get into contact, with God through the medium of the emotions;

3. One may find communion, get into contact, with God through the medium of the will.

And ~~again, to~~

~~1.~~ To find communion, get into contact, with God through the medium of the intellect, one must follow the path of thought, reason, rationalism; ~~or to~~

~~2.~~ To find communion, get into contact, with God through the medium of the emotions, one must follow the path of emotional experience, mysticism; ~~or to~~

~~3.~~ To find communion, get into contact, with God through the medium of the will, one must follow the path of action, service.

But, inasmuch as intellect, emotion, and will, are not, so to speak, water-tight compartments of the mind, cut off from all communication with each other, but are each and all more or less present in every fact of our everyday experience, it follows that rationalism, mysticism, and service are never isolated in their action, but that they, too, are all more or less present in every fact of our *religious* experience; all we can say is that we give the names of rationalism, mysticism, and service to those states or conditions of mind where rationalism, mysticism, and service are respectively most marked in our consciousness.

(1) Now, hitherto, contact, communion, with God has been attempted chiefly through the medium of intellect and emotion; the paths

of reason and mysticism have been the ones most generally followed. To obtain right views of the Highest: that has been the work of the reason, the religion of rationalism; and the outcome has been our various systems of theology. To worship devoutly, submissively: that has been the work of the emotions, the religion of mysticism; and a combination of the two, rationalism and mysticism, has resulted in ecclesiastical organization and church ritual. Indeed, up to comparatively recent times, these have been widely regarded as the only avenues by which the Highest might be approached.

As an example of this so-called "orthodox" view, and some of its implications, take the following extract from Wilkie Collins' story *The Moonstone*. The passage appears in the Narrative of that apostle of religiosity Miss Clack.

"Rachel started back from me—I blush to write it—with a scream of horror.

"'Come away!' she said. 'Come away, for God's sake, before that woman can say any more. Oh, think of my poor mother's harmless, useful, beautiful life! You were at her funeral, Mr Bruff; you saw how everybody loved her; you saw the poor helpless people crying at her grave over the loss of their best friend. And that wretch stands there, and tries

to make me doubt that my mother, who was an angel on earth, is an angel in heaven now! Don't stop to talk about it! Come away! It stifles me to breathe the same air with her! It frightens me to feel that we are in the same room together.' "

And the estimable, orthodox Miss Clack concludes her Narrative by the words: "From that day forth, I never saw Rachel Verinder again. She had my forgiveness at the time when she insulted me. She has had my prayerful good wishes ever since. And when I die—to complete the return on my part of good for evil—she will have the *Life, Letters, and Labours of Miss Jane Ann Stamper* left her as a legacy by my will."

It is the Creed that matters, say the Miss Clacks. Let *that* be stated fully; let it set down with accuracy and precision the exact relationship of man to God, and everything else that is good inevitably follows. When a life of rightful service follows, that is the direct result of the Creed—and may perhaps be regarded as a kind of bye-product.

(2) In a similar manner, mysticism has its say. The thing that matters here is worship, and an attitude of receptiveness towards the Voices from the Great Beyond. To the mystic, spiritual truth does not come by the path of reason, but

rather by that of the emotions; and it is apprehended not through a process of logic, but by spiritual intuition.

But may not religious experience, in addition to being a form of thought, a movement of emotion, be also a decision of the will? Is it not possible that religion, instead of being fundamentally a doctrine, a feeling, may also be, at bottom, a resolve? May not there be a third way of communion between the soul and the Eternal, the path of morality, of obedience to the moral law, of ethical idealism, and of duty done? Such a path, it has been well said, leads from decision to insight; from duty to vision; from fidelity to faith; from loyalty to piety; from obedience to knowledge. Thus, in the words of Frederic Robertson, "Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. In every department of knowledge there is an appropriate organ, or instrument for discovery of its specific truth....Obedience is the sole organ by which we gain a knowledge of that which cannot be seen or felt....By doing God's will, we recognize what He is."

(3) So the third path by which one may find contact, communion, with God is that of service to one's fellow-man. We sink our little selves in the Cause to which we have devoted our allegiance; we steel our will and brace



ourselves to tread with unfaltering steps the path of duty; we walk the daily round, discharge the common task in the spirit of the ideal which we have embraced; we obey the call to service. And by so doing, we "touch God's right hand," and *with obedience to the call of duty comes knowledge of spiritual truth.*

And what way to faith does Jesus bid his disciples follow? His primary teaching—though by no means all his teaching—was to the will. Follow me. Take up the cross and follow. If any man willeth to do the will he shall know of the doctrine. Beginning in the dedication of the will, the process ends in conscious communion with the Eternal.

Thus, in their ethical idealism, the consciously religious man and the social worker are toiling on the same lines; and though the latter may be unconscious of his religious office, or even hostile to it, yet his unconscious co-operation with God, or even his denial of it, does not abolish the *fact* of such co-operation.

"What a strange scene," says Peabody, "the modern world thus presents, of theoretical indifference and of practical loyalty; of people who think themselves without religion and yet daily testify to the motives of religion. Never were so many minds repelled by the

technicalities of religion; yet never were there so many people of whom the great words could be spoken: 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord...but he that doeth the will of my Father'; never so many who might ask in surprise: 'When saw we thee an hungred and fed thee, or...a stranger, and took thee in?' and are fit to receive the answer: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these,...ye have done it unto me'; never so many unconscious Christians, willing to do the will, but neither knowing nor caring to know the doctrine."

2. Now though there are three paths by which contact, communion, with God may be found, viz. rationalism, mysticism, and service, it does not necessarily follow that the same person walks always on one and the same path; on the contrary, it is probable that most men, in their varying moods and needs, make use at some time or other of all. The pity of it is that there is not a more intimate connection between them; for a due co-operation and correlation of methods would achieve much more satisfactory results. But before there can be co-operation and correlation there must be some degree of agreement; and, as yet, there is far too little agreement between rationalism and mysticism on the one hand and service on the other. How can a better state of affairs be

brought about? How may the two bodies of opinion be brought more closely together? Here three thoughts suggest themselves, and I will conclude my little book with these.

(1) *A simplification of religious creeds.* On the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith there would be comparatively little difference of opinion; these doctrines could be easily specified; and they would command the adherence of the vast majority of Western people. Call these doctrines one's beliefs; but classify the rest, the intricate details of technical theology, as over-beliefs. The former would be the common property of all; the latter would vary according to the tastes and predilections of the individuals concerned. For, just as there are certain foods which we classify as necessities of bodily life, and others which we class as luxuries; so, one would judge, there are certain doctrines which might be classed as necessities of religious life, and others—the over-beliefs—as what may be termed religious luxuries. It is the necessities of religious life that keep the soul alive, not its luxuries.

(2) *A socialization of religion.* Though religion is, at bottom, an individual matter—between a man and his God—it is far from being a matter of individualism. Work out your own salvation. Yes, but you do not work it out as

an isolated unit, rather as a member of the social body; and it is not so much by introspective analysis as by actual toil in well-doing towards your fellow-man that you save your own soul. To put it briefly, religion should look inward a great deal less, and outward a great deal more.

(3) *The spiritualization of service.* In service, there is often a peril of practical materialism; an undue glorification of machinery; a fallacious expectation that a change in economic methods will of itself produce a change of heart; a belief that outer comfort is bound to bring inner goodness. What the social worker more especially needs is the firm conviction that beneath all the forms of economic and social change that he is striving to bring about, there is proceeding a great spiritual enterprise, a movement towards the millennium of the City of God.



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